

Customer Insight report 2017 – 2018

31st July 2018



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

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Context

Brighton & Hove City Council

Customer Promise

We want the customer to be at the heart of everything we do. We have listened to our customers and have made the following 3 commitments – our Customer Promise.

- ❖ We will make it clear how you can contact or access our services 📞
- ❖ We will be clear and treat you with respect 🤝
- ❖ We will understand and get things done 📋

Full details of the Customer Promise can be found on page 7.

The purpose of this Customer Insight report is to bring together the information collected about the customer experience of using Brighton & Hove City Council services in 2017/18.

By customer we mean, any user of council services, whether voluntary or involuntary. This includes residents and visitors to the city, businesses, students, service users and their representatives. This report presents what we currently know about our customer services. Our aim is to ensure we better understand the needs of our customer, and to learn and grow consistently from the feedback we receive, in order to get the basics right.



Customer Insight is one element of our Performance Management Framework that sets out how the council manages performance, to achieve our purpose as set out in the Corporate Plan.

In 2017/18 the Customer Experience steering group has also created a ‘vision statement’ - a guiding principle for how we aim to deliver services by 2020.

Customer Experience Vision for 2020

“Getting things right first time, every time”

Our customer promise to you

We will make it clear how you can contact or access our services

- Communicate first with you digitally where possible and appropriate, because it is often quicker, more convenient for you and cost-effective.
- Where digital access is not appropriate offer you different ways to contact us and use our services.
- Where people have a disability or impairment, we will work with you to find the best ways to communicate.

We will be clear and treat you with respect

- Increasingly provide digital services but still aim to deliver a personal service, treating you with courtesy, politeness and understanding.
- Be clear and easy to understand in all our communication with you.
- Keep your personal data secure and ensure your confidentiality.

We will understand and get things done

- Aim to answer the query at first point of contact, when this cannot be achieved we provide clear information about next steps so you know what to expect.
- Take care to fully understand and respond appropriately to your needs.
- Keep you informed with up to date information and explain what we have done
- Make sure our officers have the skills and tools to deliver the service you need
- Work together across the council to provide a service that minimises your efforts

You can help us to keep our promise by

- Treating us politely and with respect
- Letting us know if you have any specific needs
- Giving us the information we need to deal with your enquiry
- Telling us if you are happy or unhappy with our service
- Participating when we seek feedback so we can learn and improve

Please tell us how we are doing

We welcome all feedback including when things don't go right. Feedback helps us to learn from what we are doing well and also our mistakes. We are committed to using this information to improve our services. Please tell us how satisfied you are with our service, [this short survey should take you approximately 2 minutes](#) if you would like to provide detailed compliment or complaint please [contact customer feedback team](#)

Monitoring our performance against this promise

We check our performance through monitoring:
 Customer satisfaction and ease of access
 Number of compliments and complaints received
 Evidence of how our customers contact us
 Survey of residents of Brighton & Hove and service users
 The results will be published through our [Customer Insight Report](#) annually.

Different ways to contact us

Website



We will:

Aim to have the Council website available for 24 hours a day all year round

Continually improve the ability to interact with us digitally



Written communication

We will:

Ensure all service emails are set up with automatic reply' with a clear indication of what will happen next



Telephones

We will:

Aim to keep average waiting times under 10 minutes when high demand is anticipated we will give a clear indication of the expected wait and

Make clear the range of ways of contacting us

Update voicemails and telephone messages regularly to hold accurate information

Face to face

We will:

Make sure our Customer service buildings are fully accessible

Aim to greet you on average within 5 minutes of arrival and to see you within 20 minutes

Make clear the range of ways of contacting us



Social media

We will:

Be clear how frequently we would respond to any queries received

Be proactive in sharing relevant information and keep this up to date



Customer Experience Vision for 2020

“Getting things right first time, every time”

Efficiency



Self-serve options are easily available via Website



Customer journeys are regularly reviewed to remove non-value added steps



A single up to date customer profile is available



The customer makes minimum contact necessary to resolve query



Customers are proactively encouraged to adopt new ways of engaging with services



In resolving customer dissatisfaction, officers are skilled in reaching and acting on mutually acceptable outcomes

Improvements



Services review and improve the customer experience as a continual process



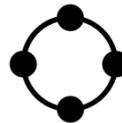
Services regularly gather feedback from customers to ensure delivery as promised



Services identify change capacity and embedding change is their focus



Sufficient data is gathered to fully understand the customer experience and used to identify areas for improvement



Services work together via Customer Experience Steering Group to form recommendations and embed these in their service

Consistency



The Customer Promise is regularly reviewed to reflect customer needs



All services are delivered in accordance with the Customer Promise



Customers are fully aware of our Customer Promise and satisfied we are delivering to the agreed standards

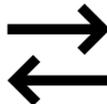


Services analyse potential impacts of changes and consult with key stakeholders before making changes to delivery

Resilience



Services proactively manage resources to reflect the channel of demand



Services share resources to manage demand and maintain customer satisfaction levels for the whole organisation



Officers can offer signposting and support regardless of department



Services collaborate with other public services, the community and voluntary sector to find common and jointly owned solutions



Results summary

Overall satisfaction with the council

As per the 2017 City Tracker survey of residents of Brighton & Hove, who have used a service within the last 12 months, satisfaction with the city council is

63%



This is a 3% increase from the 2016 result of 60%.

The national benchmark (LGA resident survey as at August 2017) is 65% - down from 68% in October '16 which narrows the gap between our performance and other LAs.



Customer feedback received

Overall, there has been a less than 1% increase in complaints, from 1,549 in 2016/17 to 1,560 in 2017/18.

The highest proportional change has been for Cityclean (+151 complaints)



There has been a 26% increase, from 730 to 922 in compliments about council services since 2016/17.



The highest proportional change has been for Adult Social Care Provider services (+30 compliments)

Reasons for customer contact

Information on why customers are calling continues to be collected in 2017/18 by 5 of our most used services: Revenues, Benefits, Housing Management, Cityclean & Parking Services.

Highlights of this are below.

Of the

8,609

calls received on average in a month during 2017/18, against which a reason was recorded:



8% were about resident parking permits

7% were to Council Tax, querying a balance or payments due.

7% were to Council Tax about a move or change of household (in most circumstances, this can be done online)

4% about a change of vehicle or address for a parking permit.

Quality of customer service by channel



Customer survey conducted by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) has shown that our customer satisfaction is highest when using a face to face channel, and lowest for contact by email, the same as in 2016/17

Customer satisfaction with our services

In line with the national benchmark figure we have set a target of 65% for customer satisfaction.

65%

23 of 26

services have reported having met or exceeded this target in 2017/18.



Services whose results are below this target: Environment Contact Centre, Council Tax & Planning

18 of 25 key services also reported that 80%

of customers found it VERY OR FAIRLY EASY to access the service.



Services whose results are below this target: Environment Contact Centre, Benefits Service, Council Tax, Parking, Planning, Housing Needs and Transport & Highways.

Responses to customer feedback



The number of complaints responded to within 10 working days continues to improve, going to 72% from 67% since 2016/17, and from 66% in 2015/16, but is still below the target of 80%.

Complaints escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2

2016/17

12.3%

Area with most significant increase since 2016/17: Parking

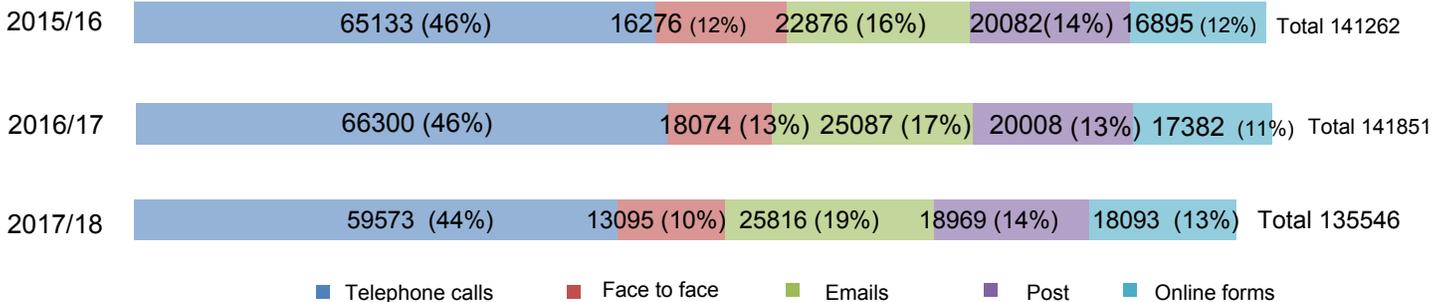


2017/18

10.4%

Area with most significant decrease: Housing Repairs

Customer contact volumes for transactional services by channel



The overall volume of customer contact has reduced by 5% since 2016/17

Phone

REDUCED BY 13%

Overall, incoming calls to the organisation have reduced by 13% since 2016/17, with particular decreases seen in Housing Management (42%), Development Management (40%), and Electoral Services (68%).

In addition to this, calls to a switchboard operator have reduced by 33% (from 11,135 to 7,493) with more callers using the automated options available rather than choosing to be put through by an operator.

Online forms

Overall submissions of online forms have increased by 4% since 2016/17.

Notable increases since 2016/17 have been seen within the Benefits service (52%) and Parking services (39%)

Services who have seen significant decreases in online form submissions include Registrars (62%) and the Environment Contact Centre (60%) though due to a change in the software for online forms, there may be discrepancies in the combined data.

Website

Overall visitor numbers to the council website have increased by 10% since last year, at 4,914,296 sessions.

Emails

Overall, there has been a less than 1% increase in unstructured emails since 2016/17.

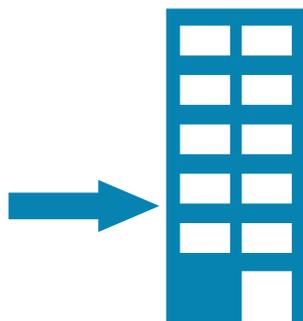
Post

Incoming post volumes continue to reduce with a 5% decrease overall since 2016/17. Significant decreases have been seen in Parking Services (55%) and Housing Management (32%).

Between Aug 17 and Mar 18, we have kept our promise of having an average call waiting time of 10 minutes or less. The services struggling to achieve this in particular months were Council Tax, City Environmental Management, Housing Needs and Parking.

Face to Face contact

There has been a 30% reduction in footfall to service reception points overall since 2016/17.



Explanation of key changes in customer contact

Overall contact has reduced by 5% since 2016/17, below are some of the changes which have made the most significant contributions to this reduction. All figures are monthly averages.

Telephone contact

Housing Customer Service Team – 42% reduction in phone calls since 2016/17 (from 5277 p/m - 3065 p/m)

Housing Customer Service Team have changed their reporting method in order to exclude double counting of customers who, on calling HCST choose automated options such as Housing Repairs, in previous years, this meant that the contact was being reported both by the Housing Customer Service Team and Housing Repairs.

Development Management – 40% reduction (from 5591 p/m – 3348 p/m)

Development Management (Planning applications) calls have reduced, reflecting their Customer Service Standards introduced in October, which stipulate that all officers should use a voicemail message when they aren't available to take calls from the public – informing the caller of the dates that they will be available to take calls, resulting in fewer unanswered calls to the officer lines.

Electoral Services – 68% reduction (from 3191 p/m – 1016 p/m)

Electoral Services calls have reduced by 68% since 2016/17 as the referendum in 2016 produced an unusually high volume of contact, higher than usual during a general or local election.

Access Point phones – 18% reduction (from 2253 p/m – 1853 p/m)

Callers to Access Point for an external service (Carers hub) are now routed directly to them rather than being passed on by Access Point. Professionals have also been strongly encouraged to refer clients through an online form, rather than by phone or email.

Face to Face visits

Benefits service – 29% reduction (from 2320 p/m – 1656 p/m)

Benefits have introduced digital / self-service days – two days each week where there is no traditional drop in face to face service, but customers are signposted and supported to use self-service options, such as online forms, scanning of evidence requested etc. Housing and other teams are collaborating to support the success of this approach.

Post

Parking Services – 55% reduction (from 1630 p/m - 731 p/m)

Parking Services have seen a reduction in physical post received, due to increased functionality and promotion of online forms.

Summary – Key recommendations for Heads of Service

The Customer Experience Steering Group works to strengthen consistency, resilience, efficiency and improvements in the way customer services are delivered across the council in order to increase customer satisfaction. All key customer facing services are represented on this group. The group has developed the Customer Promise in consultation with customers, a Vision for 2020 (on the following pages) and an associated action plan to deliver this vision, the following recommended actions emerging from this report form part of these plans. These recommendations are based on the comments from customers through a variety of customer feedback, including complaints, surveys, as well as the volume data supplied by services and customer journey maps.

The three priority recommendation themes:

1. Proactive management when things don't go as planned

Despite our best efforts, sometimes things go wrong with initiatives, communications, project launches or software systems, which have an impact on large numbers of residents. The resulting customer contact can seem overwhelming, and can make it difficult to get rapid, consistent communications out to help residents and other teams know what is happening.

Customer Feedback example:

"... or, at the very least, contacted me to explain the situation. I did eventually get an explanation on Facebook and Twitter, but the real issues are POOR COMMUNICATION and INEFFICIENT INTRODUCTION OF THE SCHEME"

Recommended Action:

Please ensure there is a dated, regularly updated temporary message on your phone line advising customers of what the issue is and what they should do. Ensure social media and web pages are updated regularly to give the latest information about the issue. Amend your email 'auto-reply' to reflect the current situation. Inform and seek help from other teams to manage increased demand.

2. Embed a 'One Council' approach to our customer experience

At busy times, it can sometimes be tempting to forward emails, or transfer calls to another team who officers think may be better placed to help with a customer enquiry, even though it may be quick and easy for the officer to help the customer get the info that they need.

Customer Feedback example:

"...department seems to be in 2 distinct areas. I wasn't sure exactly who did what.. I think I may have emailed the wrong dept but they kindly forwarded it on and ensured that the case was dealt with."

Recommended Action:

Produce FAQ guides for your service's simple, generic queries and work with other teams to exchange this information. Have these guides handy for front-line staff to help signpost customer to the information they need, rather than adding them to another team's queue.
Arrange shadowing exchange sessions with other front-line teams for members of front-line staff, so they understand each other's roles more.

3. Prioritise resourcing your preferred channel of customer contact

Maintaining high standards of customer satisfaction when resources are limited can be challenging; by ensuring that you offer the best possible service through the channels that are most efficient for you and for your customers, you can de-incentivise contact through more resource intensive routes.

Customer Feedback example:

"I would appreciate it if the time for a response via e mail be made shorter as when I have reported issues through the telephone service they are resolved much quicker. However time spent waiting for the call to be answered is long and this costs money."

Recommended Actions:

Consider how you allocate resources across different communication channels, and incentivising our preferred channels by ensuring that service is at least as good/fast, if not better/quicker through that channel, as per our Channel Shift guidance.
Ensure that the most efficient and effective way for customers to contact you is the most prominent contact detail on your webpages, template letters and is communicated to other services and advice agencies that may transfer or refer customers to your service.

Surveys conducted by services

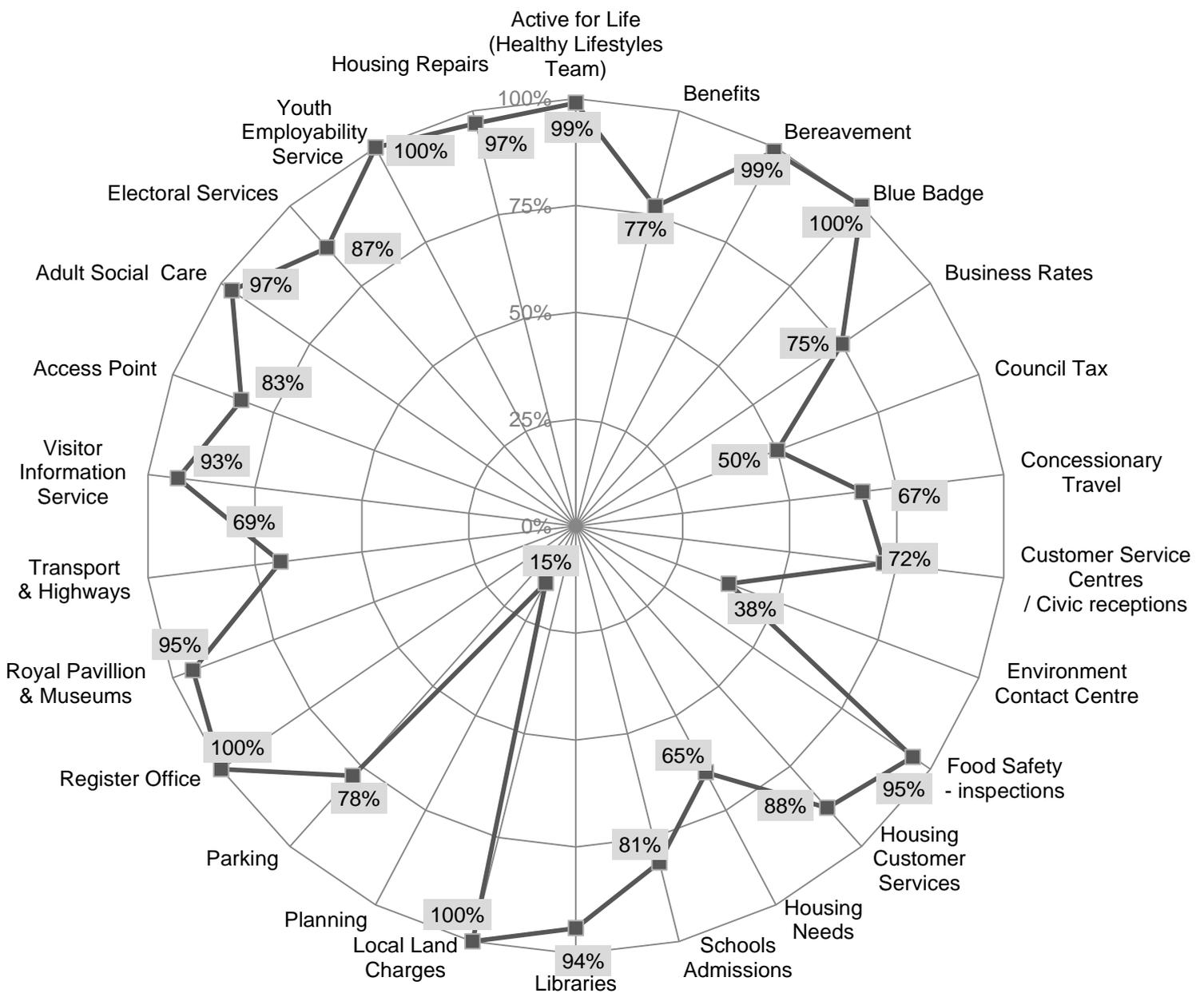
How was the standard of customer service received?

Service users were asked the following question:

(1) How was the standard of customer service you received?

- Responses included: Very good, fairly good, neither good nor poor, fairly poor, very poor

The below chart shows the percentage of 'very good & fairly good' responses



Services whose customer satisfaction was below the LGA resident satisfaction figure:

Environment Contact Centre, Council Tax, Planning.

Additionally the percentage of customers who were 'very or fairly' satisfied with Stage 1 complaints handling across all services was 45% in 2017/18.

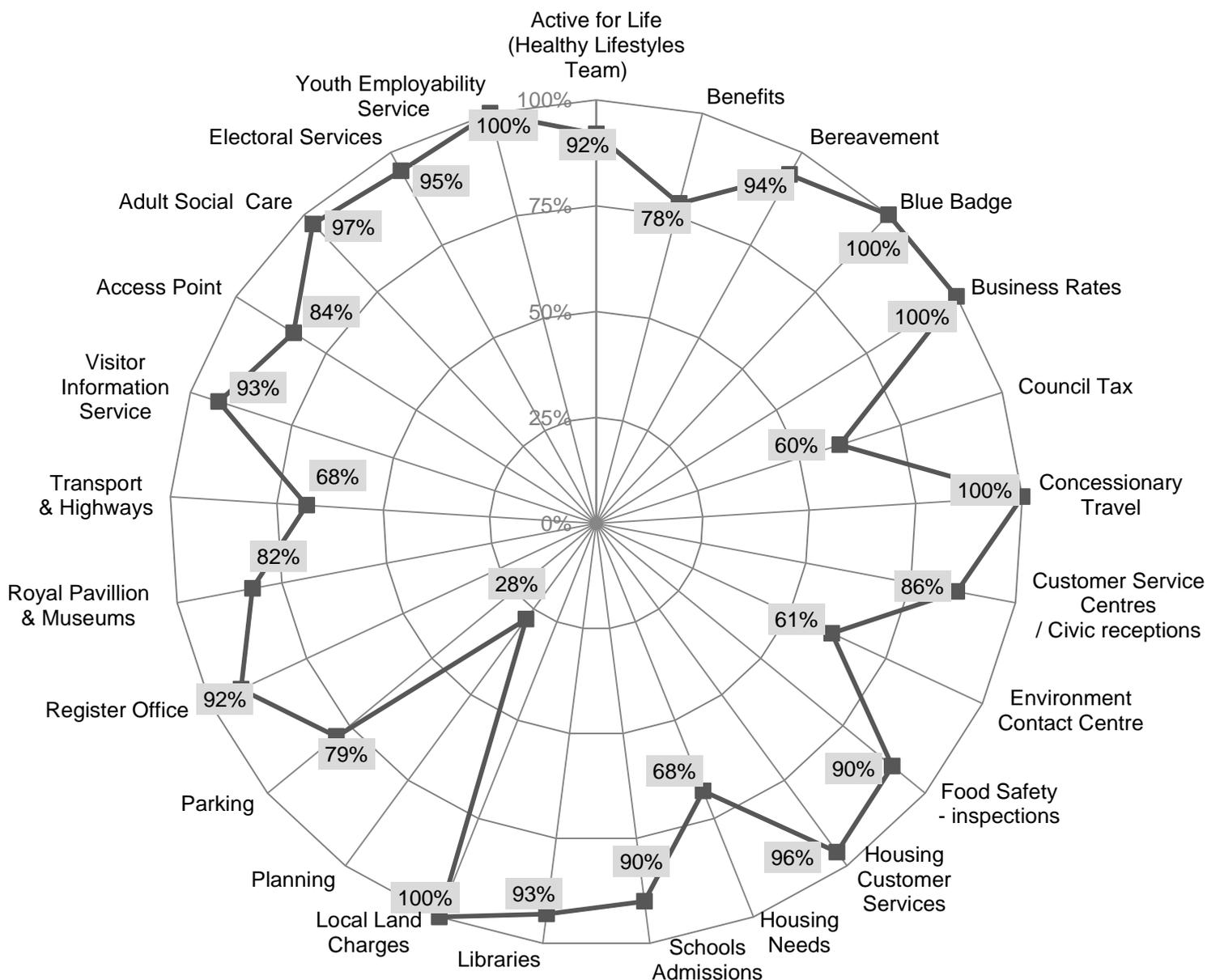
How easy or difficult was it to use a service?

Service users were asked the following question:

(1) How easy or difficult was it for you to use our service?

- Responses included: Very easy, fairly easy, neither easy nor difficult, fairly difficult, very difficult

The below chart shows the percentage of 'very easy & fairly easy' responses



Services whose results were below our internal target of 80%:

Environment Contact Centre, Benefits Service, Council Tax, Parking, Planning, Housing Needs, Transport & Highways.

Additionally the percentage of respondents who found it 'very or fairly easy' to make a complaint was 5

Notes about surveying

The above charts show all positive responses to the two standard questions ('very and fairly good' and 'very and fairly easy'), in line with other surveys, such as City Tracker and the LGA national resident survey.

Due to the variety of response rates and survey methodologies used, it isn't possible to calculate a confidence interval for these results. Some services invite customers to complete surveys via an email, others over the phone or in libraries, receptions and customer service centres, some use a combination of these methods. Some results have been taken from surveys undertaken by national bodies, such as the National Transport & Highways Network where comparable questions are asked. Guidance was provided by the Customer Experience Team in terms of improving reliability of the survey results. Some services have been unable to follow this guidance due to capacity issues and/or system limitations.

Work continues in 2018/19 to ensure all customer facing services use these standard questions when surveying customers, where appropriate and that services use a prescribed methodology in order to increase confidence in the validity of the results.

Customer comments

Customers of transactional services completing the satisfaction survey are invited to make comments to give details of their customer experience / suggestions as to how the standard of service they received could have been improved and how it could have been easier for them to access our services.

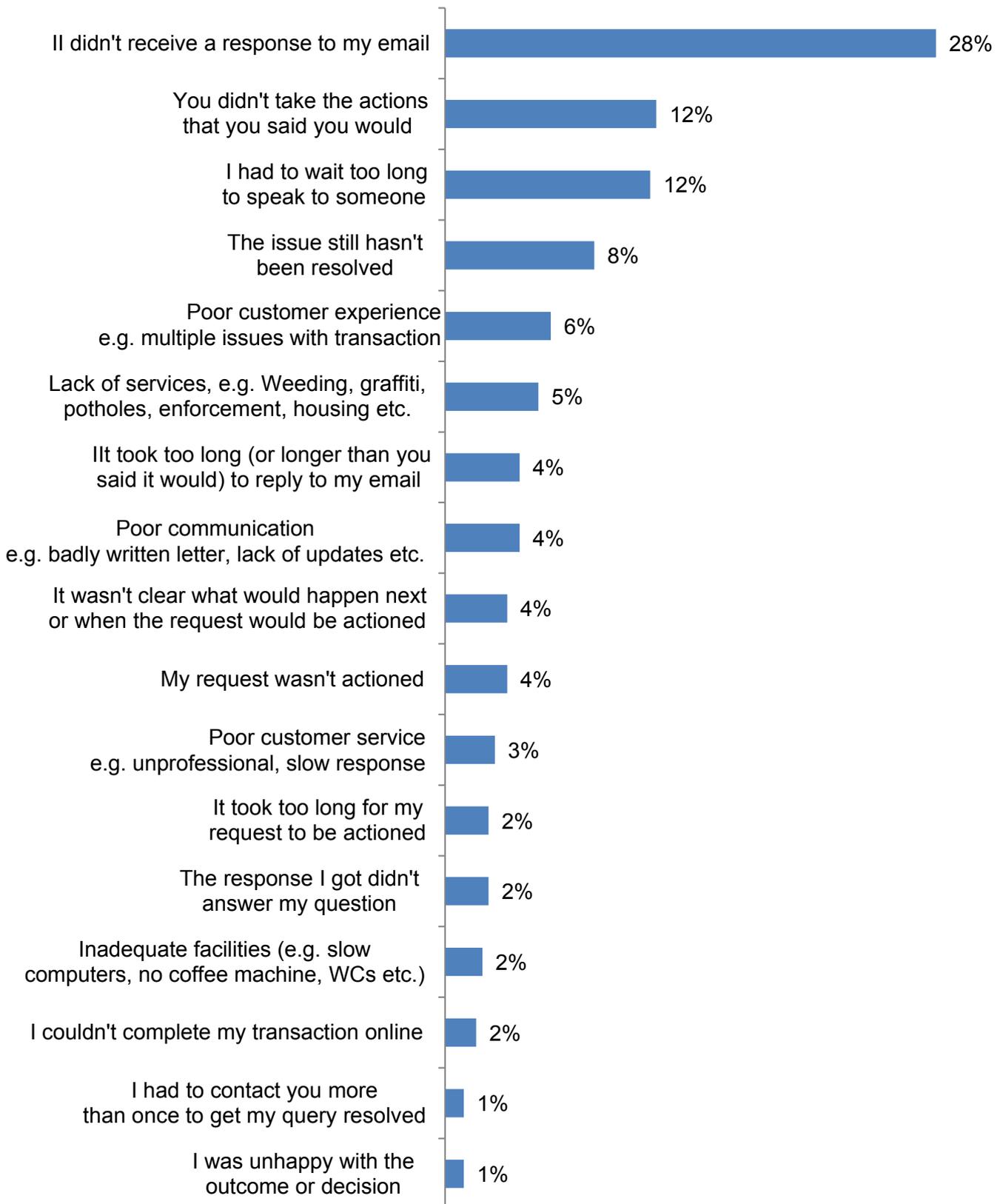
Not all services use the online survey, and some teams received significantly higher response rates through this method than others, so the comments may not be considered as representative of the overall customer experience.

To enable some basic analysis of the free text comments submitted, the comments have been themed and rephrased. All of the verbatim customer comments have been sent to services for them to identify areas of good practice, or where there is room for improvement in their service delivery.

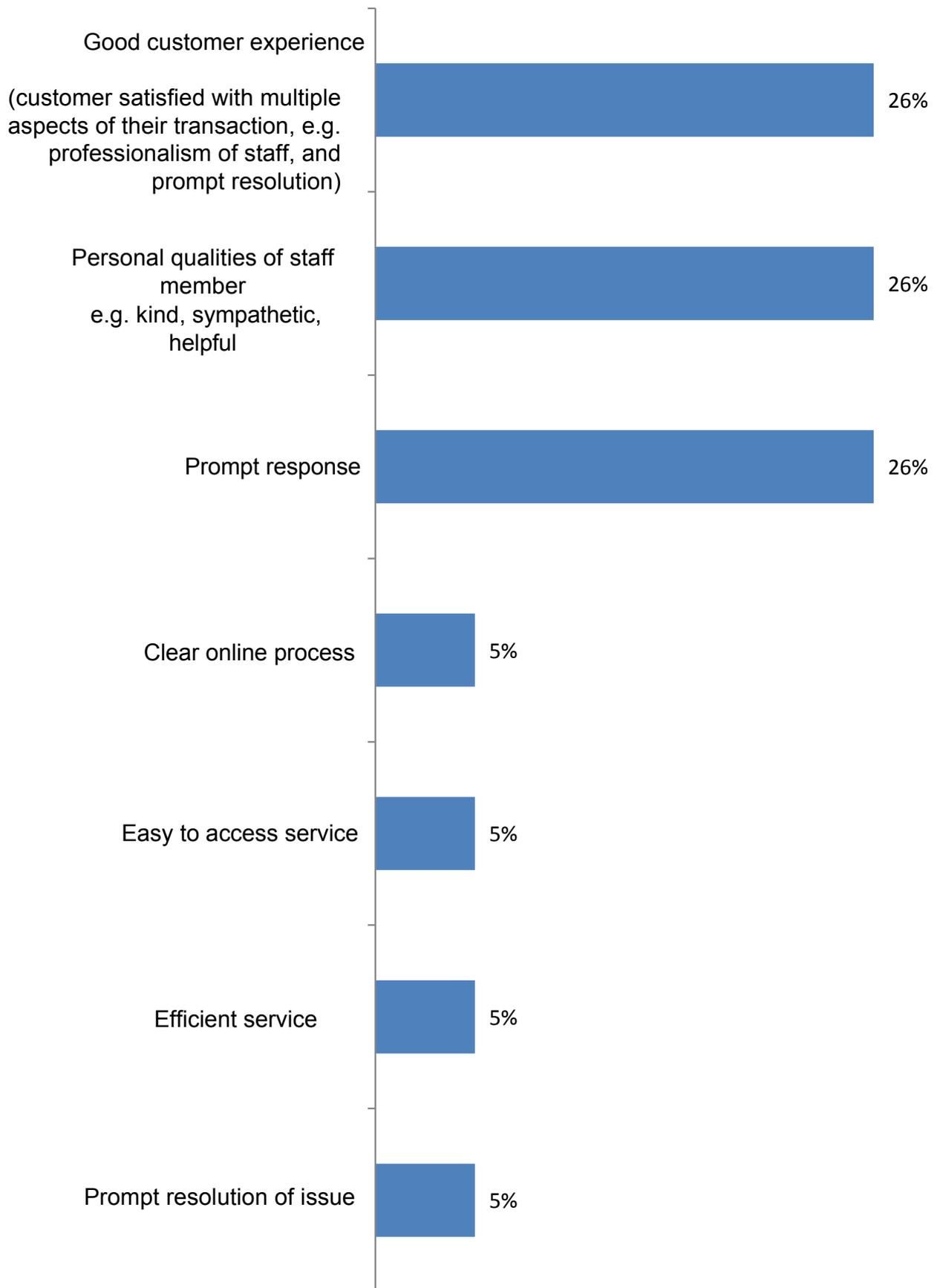
The charts on the following pages show a themed sample of the free text comments made, we received over a thousand comments, so we have taken a random sample of 300, separated into those which expressed dissatisfaction and those which expressed satisfaction.

285 comments were made which expressed dissatisfaction about their customer experience and 15 comments were made which expressed satisfaction with the way their contact was dealt with.

Customer comments expressing dissatisfaction gathered from surveys conducted by services

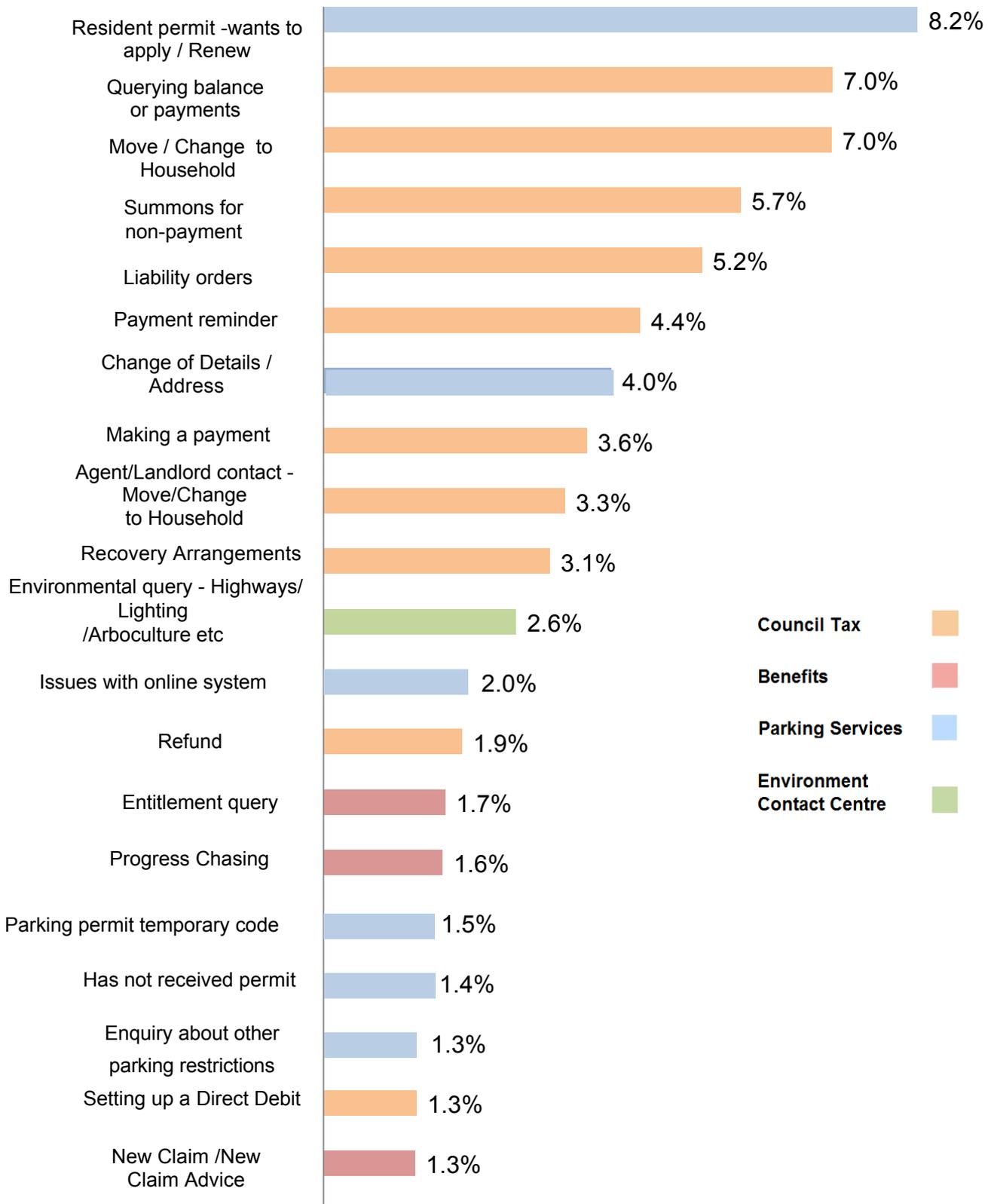


Customer comments expressing satisfaction



What are the reasons for customers contacting us?

Of the 8,609 calls received on average per month in 2017/18, against which a reason was recorded, 8% were about resident parking permits, 7% were to query the balance or payment schedule for Council Tax, and 3% about environmental issues such as streetlighting, Arboriculture, highway maintenance etc.



The top twenty recorded reasons for customer contact in any one month - as a percentage of call volumes against which specific reasons were recorded, only the top twenty reasons are displayed in this chart.

Currently five services who deliver most of the top twenty highest volume transactions (Revenues, Benefits, Parking, Housing Management and Cityclean) are recording this information, the average rate of recording is around 50%. As codes are changed periodically by services to gain intelligence on particular transactions or service areas, it isn't possible to represent total volumes for the full year.

The rate of recording varies between services, so isn't a complete picture of the organisation's telephone contact, but gives a broad overview of why customers are contacting us. These figures are a snapshot month's contact in 2017/18, of approximately 50% of calls.

Key findings

- As the Environment Contact Hub, Cityclean's phone team take calls about a vast range of matters, including highways maintenance, arboriculture - verges, vegetation, street lighting etc. Due to the range of transactions these combined enquiries account for the highest recorded volume contact to that team, though the rate of recording and absence of missed collection contact suggests the information is not representative of business as usual contact. Changes in this data since last year also reflect that calls regarding parking permits are now being handled by parking officers, rather than the Environment Contact hub.

- Council Tax's highest volume enquiries are for reporting a change of address, querying a bill or payment schedule and enquiries about court summonses for non-payment of council tax. This is similar to last year, however work is still in progress to allow customers to check their own bills online which should reduce the volume of calls to confirm balances or payment schedules. Text reminders for late payments are now also being used by the service, to reduce the volume of recovery action required.

- Housing Benefits main reasons for contact are for advice on submitting a new claim, queries about potential or existing entitlement to benefits and from customers chasing the progress of their application.

- Housing Management's highest volume enquiries relate to car parks & garages (21%) housing repairs, and tenancy issues. The team are working with Digital First on a mobile app for residents to find, rent and book car parking spaces and garages for themselves, which will be more efficient for the customer and for the teams.

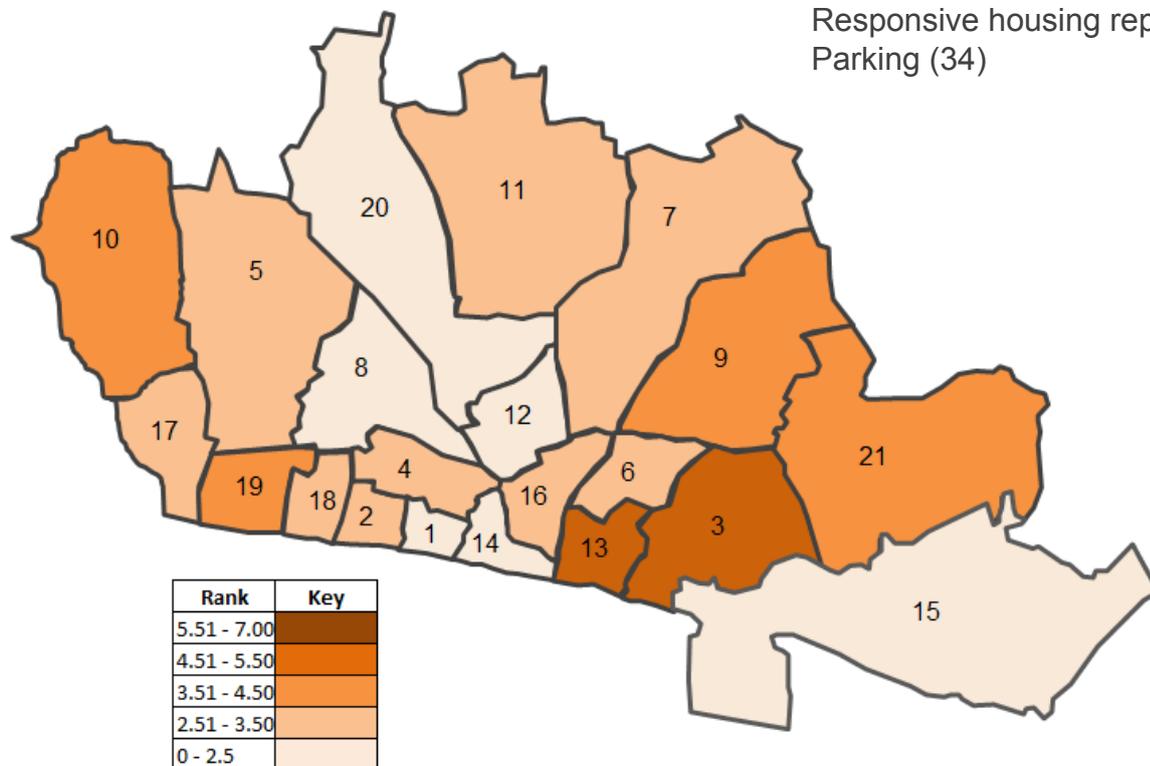
- Parking Services' customer contact about parking permits (residents and visitors) represents around 30% of their telephone contact (a reduction from over 50% last year), however the online permit system introduced for new parking zones has had some issues, with 8% of contact coming from customers needing assistance with their online transaction. A system will be reprocedured in 2019 to reduce these issues.

Where do we receive complaints from?

The map and table below show the number of complaints across the city's main areas (wards) per 1,000 head of the population. We have also shown the actual number of complaints in each ward.

Top three issues of complaint in 2017/18 (where postcodes have been given)

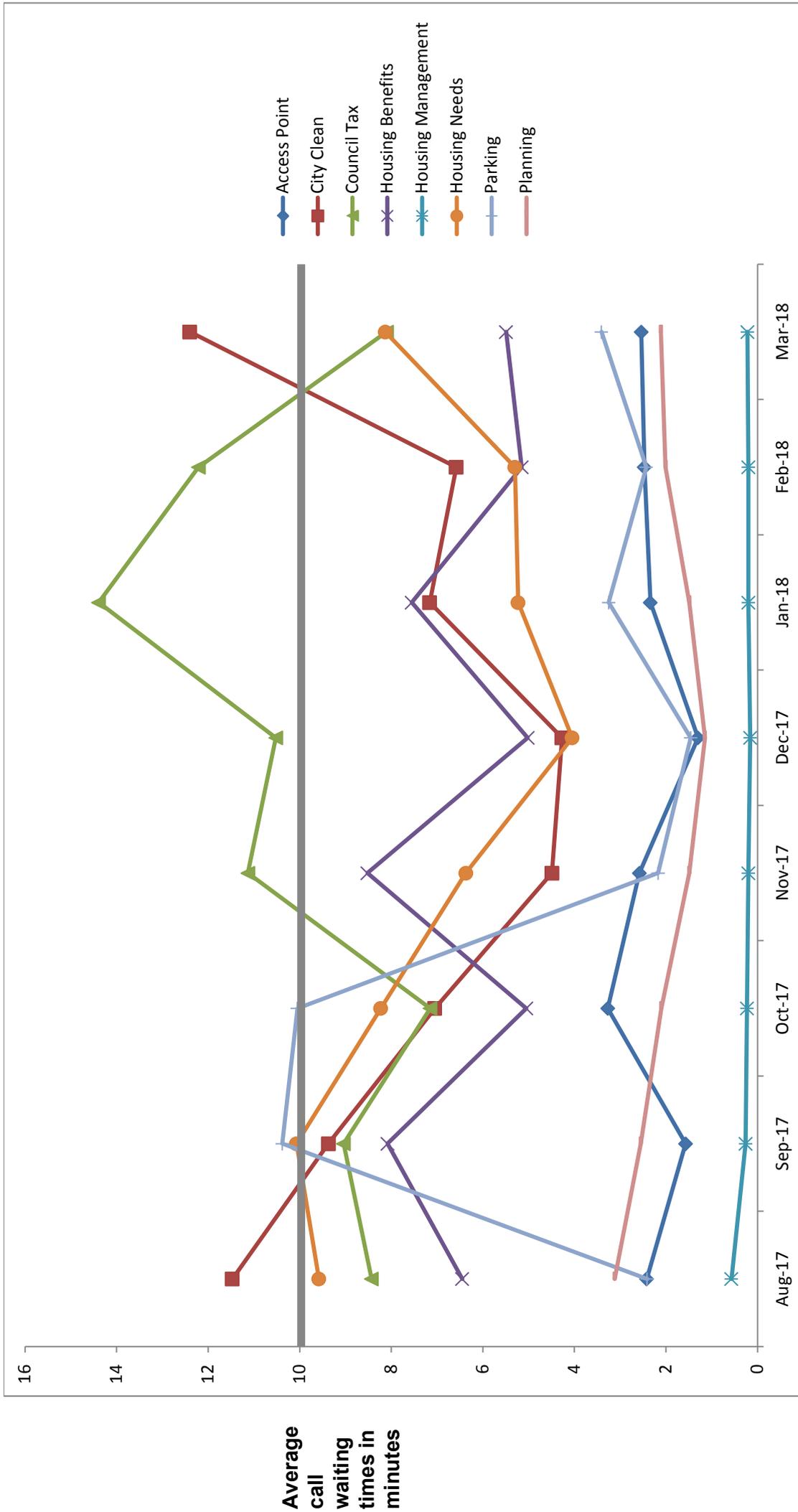
Refuse and/or recycling (298)
Responsive housing repairs (113)
Parking (34)



Ward	Complaints per 1000 head of population	Totals	Top three issues of complaint
1. Brunswick and Adelaide	1.6	17	Parking Permits (2) Council Tax billing and recovery (2) Missed recycling or refuse collection (5)
2. Central Hove	2.7	26	Parking (6) Benefits services (4) Seafront (2)
3. East Brighton	4.6	65	Housing responsive repairs (18) Refuse and recycling (10) Parking (3)
4. Goldsmid	2.7	43	Housing responsive repairs (10) Refuse and recycling (10) Benefits services (3)
5. Hangleton and Knoll	3.2	47	Housing responsive repairs (8) Refuse and recycling - missed collections (10) Housing repairs - other contractor (6)
6. Hanover and Elm Grove	3.1	52	Housing responsive repairs (4) Refuse and recycling (24) Parking (7)

7. Hollingdean and Stanmer	3.49	57	Housing responsive repairs (11) Refuse and recycling (12) Council Tax (6)
8. Hove Park	1.6	17	Recovery action (2) Recycling (4) Highway Maintenance (2)
9. Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	4.0	72	Housing responsive repairs (17) Refuse and recycling (20) Housing repairs - other contractor (5)
10. North Portslade	3.8	38	Refuse and recycling - missed collections (12) Housing responsive repairs (7) Temporary accommodation (3)
11. Patcham & Hollingbury	3.1	45	Recycling and Refuse (17) Housing responsive repairs (4) City Regeneration and development (6)
12. Preston Park	2.4	37	Refuse and recycling (16) Parking Management (6) Council Tax (3)
13. Queens Park	5.10	79	Housing responsive repairs (27) Recycling and Refuse (7) Families, Children & Learning - appeals (4)
14. Regency	1.9	20	Recycling (6) Revenues (3) City Environmental management - other (3)
15. Rottingdean Coastal	1.9	27	Refuse and recycling (11) Parking management (2) Garden waste (2)
16. St Peters and North Laine	3.0	57	Refuse (7) Street cleaning (4) Parking (8)
17. South Portslade	3.3	32	Refuse and recycling (16) Housing responsive repairs (4) Garden waste (3)
18. Westbourne	2.8	29	Refuse and recycling (12) Benefits service (2) Housing Options (3)
19. Wish	3.6	35	Refuse and recycling (19) Estates services (2) West Housing office (2)
20. Withdean	2.5	38	Refuse and recycling (24) Families, Children and Learning (2) Parking (5)
21. Woodingdean	2.7	27	Housing responsive repairs (3) Refuse and recycling (9) Housing management (3)

Average call waiting times for high transaction services



Learning from customer feedback – Customer Insight monthly dashboard

In 2017/18 we have introduced a monthly Customer Insight dashboard which gives metrics around complaints, compliments, phone contact and areas of learning taken directly from customer feedback. Below is the learning from the dashboards so far.

August 2017

1. When changes are made within a service, any adverse impact on customer experience can be minimised if:

- Customers are informed through clear communication the best way to contact the service if they have any queries.
- Adequate resources are arranged in advance to manage the change
- Front line staff within the service are trained and have access to information to enable them to answer potential queries
- Other potentially affected services are briefed in advance so they are able to assist the customers to find answers to their enquiries

2. To prevent misuse of customer data, services should familiarise and remind themselves of and comply with the guidance on what to do when there is a breach of personal data

September 2017

1. Keeping customers informed

The analysis of one of the most frequently received complaints highlights that officers wait until they are ready to provide a full response before the customer is contacted. In order to manage customer expectations, please keep them regularly informed when their enquiries and concerns are being dealt with. This is so customers feel re-assured that we haven't forgotten about them. Analysis of compliments tells us that this is what customers value.

2. Being proactive when things go wrong

Please ensure there is a temporary message on your phone line advising customers of what the issue is and what they should do. Ensure social media and web pages are updated regularly to give latest information about the issue. Amend 'auto-reply' to reflect the current situation. Inform and seek help from other teams to manage increased demand.

October 2017

1. Signposting

Where we are unable to provide information that a customer may want, we should be as helpful as possible in signposting customers to the appropriate source of information to resolve their query.

2. Record keeping

Teams need to consistently maintain all customer case records in a careful, accurate and professional manner, including ensuring emails sent and received are copied to the case file in the prescribed location (team database, electronic document management system, shared drive), and notes of telephone calls and copies of correspondence are retained in a location accessible to relevant others (e.g. not in individual email inbox or P drive/desktop).

3. Keeping promises

When a response is promised (by any method phone call, email etc.), we need to ensure a response is provided as agreed. If we subsequently feel the contact is not necessary, it is poor practice to not do things we have committed to. It may be helpful to use Outlook calendar or a task list to remind of an agreed response date or time.

November 2017

1. Quality of communications

Our communications should be delivered with care and empathy and with the aim of finding the best solution for customers. When giving advice to customers be clear and try to check they have understood what you are saying. In your initial communication with people who have raised complaints, be careful to explain what may/may not be possible so that you are managing their expectations.

2. Webpages

Regularly review and update your webpages. Ensure the FAQ section is relevant and up to date.

3. Care with information

Ensure you are able to positively identify customers through security questions before divulging information which could be considered personal or sensitive. Take care to check for supporting evidence rather than simply relying on verbal information. When passing on information take care that it is going to the correct team.

December 2017

1. Customer service skills

Managers to ensure relevant officers in their team have the necessary skills and knowledge needed to provide good quality service for your customers. Lack of customer service skills is one of the key reasons for customer dissatisfaction.

2. Record keeping

Keep good and up to date records of customer contacts and actions that you have taken so that your colleagues have a full understanding of customer needs and are better able to help them in your absence.

January 2018

1. Alleged discrimination

When a customer tells us about an alleged incidence of discrimination by a member of staff or a contractor acting on behalf of BHCC please ensure you discuss with your line manager and keep record of any discussions and subsequent actions taken.

2. Reporting hate incidents

When a customer tells us about a hate incident i.e. an incident which is based on prejudice because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or their gender identity, perpetrated by a member of public please sign post them to Police or Community Safety Team (communitysafety.casework@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk). You may like to share information about the support which is available, it can be found on our website at <http://www.safeinthecity.info/casework-team>.

February 2018

Good practice with email correspondence

- When sending attachments to customers ensure any track changes have been accepted or rejected in documents included for the customer.
- If you want colleagues to see a copy of what you are sending to the customer consider whether it is better to 'copy' them into that correspondence or to 'forward' them a copy of your response to the customer. Forwarding will reduce the number of people the customer can respond to and can be used to help ensure the customer gets a single point of contact if that is your aim. Using this approach will enable you to streamline, contain, and control the communications and make communications with us more straightforward for the customer.
- Replies should contain the full name and position of the officer sending the email so that it is appropriately formal and professional unless you are satisfied that a more familiar approach is going to be acceptable. But in any event please see next bullet point.
- All correspondence should be compliant with the [Customer Promise guidance](#) on the Wave. Pay particular attention to the section on email signatures, all services should adopt this practice.

March 2018

1. Business Continuity

• Make sure that you are familiar with your team's Business Continuity Plan and how it covers situations such as adverse weather, closure of your usual place of work, unavailability of computer systems or similar.

• If your team provides a front line service, either face to face or over the phone, check whether your Business Continuity Plan contains specific procedures which help your team continue to provide a service when there are disruptions.

2. Communication when sending bulk emails to residents

- Use a small group of colleagues to check all links are working before sending to customers.
- Send bulk messages at a time during the day when there are people available to correct any problems that occur.

Next steps

Improving customer satisfaction

As the way in which our customers contact us changes (increased take up on online and email services, reductions in post, footfall and phone calls) we should adapt the way we offer our services in order to improve customer satisfaction.

These observations are made based on the comments from customers through a variety of customer feedback, including complaints, surveys, as well as the volume data supplied by services and customer journey maps, a method of tracking individual customer experiences retrospectively to gain insight into our processes from the customer's position, and to find opportunities for improvement.

These recommended actions may also contribute towards meeting one of the council's key objectives for 2017 – 2020. **“Getting the basics right...”**

Improving customer service delivery

- ❖ Embedding our customer promise to meet the measurable standards for customer service delivery.
- ❖ Exploring options for better use of space and improved customer experiences in our Customer Service Centres, with the work being led by Head of Communications and Customer Service & Security Manager.
- ❖ Redesign of the website, with an increased focus on transactions, based on user experience research.
- ❖ Exploring the creation of a tailored customer service training programme with a 'one council' focus.
- ❖ Creating a 'nudge toolkit for services - using behavioral insight to improve our communications with residents.
- ❖ Supporting services in ensuring that they maximise the investment in their services, to advise on changing working practices, channel shift strategy and change management.
- ❖ Digital First are working on streamlining the organisation's requests for supporting evidence from customers - exploring where we already hold information (such as residency details through council tax records), reducing the burden on residents and services.

Improving data quality

- ❖ Continuing to improve our understanding of the telephone reporting system to ensure higher quality and greater consistency in our telephone data, using the Avaya Customer Management System.
- ❖ Assisting services in identifying a statistically valid number of survey respondents and consistent methodologies to enable more robust, detailed analysis and confidence in using the data for performance and equalities monitoring. A business case is being created to improve the confidence interval of survey results, and to reduce the burden for services.

- ❖ Working with the relevant internal teams and external suppliers to improve quality of and ease of access to, data on online form submissions.
- ❖ Work with Digital First to ensure automated, specific reporting is available in any new development.
- ❖ Including more teams in this report in future years, to gain a fuller picture of the organisation's customer contact.
- ❖ Further development and wider circulation of the monthly Customer Insight dashboard, as a tool for staff engagement and performance monitoring against the Customer Promise and other service standards.

This and previous year's reports are published on our website:

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/customerinsightreport

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